

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) [PROCESS OF TANNING HIDE, characterized by the fact that] A process of tanning hide comprising, before submitting the hide to contact with chrome salts, [comprises] an acidification step wherein [the] an external pH of the hide reaches values between about 3.5 and 5 and [the] a pH of [the] an internal part of a cross section of the hide is between about 4.0 and 6.5.

2. (Currently amended) [PROCESS] The process according to claim 1, [characterized by the fact that] wherein the acidification is carried out by means of organic acids.

3. (Currently amended) [PROCESS] The process according to claim 2, [characterized by the fact that] wherein the organic acids are selected from formic, acetic, dicarboxylic acids [such as] including succinic, glutaric or adipic acid, maleic or fumaric anhydrides, tricarboxylic and hydroxycarboxylic acids and their mixtures.

4. (Currently amended) [PROCESS] The process according to claim 3, [characterized by the fact that] wherein the organic acid is one from acetic, formic, succinic, glutaric or adipic acid, maleic or fumaric anhydrides or their mixtures.

5. (Currently amended) [PROCESS] The process according to claim 1, [characterized by the fact that] wherein the external pH of the hide is about 3.8 to 4.2 and the pH of the internal part of a cross section of the hide is between about 4.0 and 5.5.

6. (Currently amended) [PROCESS] The process according to [one of claims 1 to 5] claim 1, [characterized by the fact that the] wherein a pH of [the] an acidification bath reaches values within the range of about 3.5 to 5.

7. (Currently amended) [PROCESS] The process according to claim 6, [characterized by the fact that] wherein the pH of the acidification bath is about 4 to 5.

8. (Currently amended) [PROCESS] The process according to claim 1, [characterized by the fact that] wherein a [the] quantity of added acid is about 0.3 to about 1.1 % by weight with relation to [the] a weight of the hide.

9. (Currently amended) [PROCESS] The process according to claim 1, [characterized by the fact that] wherein a [the] duration of the acidification step is enough to reach pH disclosed in any of claims 5 or 6.

10. (Currently amended) [PROCESS] The process according to claim 9, [characterized by the fact that] wherein the acidification step takes about 1 to 5 hours.

11. (Currently amended) [PROCESS] The process according to claim 1, [characterized by the fact that] wherein the chrome salt is basic chrome sulfate in the form of salt and/or in liquid solutions.

12. (Currently amended) [PROCESS] The process according to claim 11, [characterized by the fact that] wherein the chrome salt is a basic chrome sulfate with 33 % alkalinity in Schrolemmmer grades and about 25 to 26 % in chrome III oxide.

13. (Currently amended) [PROCESS] The process according to [any one of claims 1, 11 or 12] claim 1, [characterized by the fact that] wherein the chrome salt is present in about 5 % to about 7 % by weight relative to [the] a weight of the hide.

14. (Currently amended) [PROCESS] The process according to [any one of claims 1, 11, 12 or 13] claim 1, [characterized by the fact that] wherein the chrome salt is in contact with the hide for about 1 to 6 hours.

15. (Currently amended) [PROCESS] The process according to claim 1, [characterized by the fact that] wherein a salt is added to regulate the final pH and provide higher exhaustion of chrome in the tanning bath.

16. (Currently amended) [PROCESS] The process according to claim 15, [characterized by the fact that] wherein the salt is sodium formate or acetate.

17. (Currently amended) [PROCESS] The process according to [any one of claims 15 or 16] claim 15, [characterized by the fact that] wherein the salt is added in a quantity of about 0.4% to 1.2% by weight, relative to [the] a weight of the hide, depending on the thickness of the hide to be tanned.

18. (Currently amended) [PROCESS] The process according to claim 17, [characterized by the fact that] wherein the salt is added in a quantity of about 0.4% to 0.8% by weight, more particularly about 0.4% to 0.5% for divided hide and about 0.8% to 1.0% for integral hide, relative to the weight of the hide.

19. (Currently amended) [PROCESS] The process according to [any of claims 15 to 18] claim 15, [characterized by the fact that] wherein the salt addition step takes about 3 to 16 hours.

20. (Currently amended) [PROCESS] The process according to claim 19, [characterized by the fact that] wherein the salt addition step takes about 3 to 8 hours, more particularly about 3 to 5 hours.

21. (Currently amended) [PROCESS] The process according to claim 1, [characterized by the fact that] wherein the final bath is heated at temperatures of about 40 to 50°C.

22. (Currently amended) [TANNED HIDE] A tanned hide [characterized by the fact] that is obtained by means of the process of [any one of claims 1 to 21] claim 1.

23. (Currently amended) [TANNED HIDE] The tanned hide according to claim 22, [characterized by the fact that] wherein the hide presents chrome III oxide Cr_2O_3 fixing which is enough to guarantee resistance to [the] a retraction test.

24. (Currently amended) [TANNED HIDE] The tanned hide according to claim 22, [characterized by the fact that] wherein the hide presents chrome III oxide Cr_2O_3 fixing of more than 3.7% (dry basis).

25. (Currently amended) [TANNED HIDE] The tanned hide according to claim 22, [characterized by the fact that] wherein the hide presents chrome crossing higher than 80% in a cross section.

26. (Currently amended) [TANNED HIDE, as defined in] The tanned hide according to claim 25, [which] wherein the hide presents 100% chrome crossing in a cross section.

27. (Currently amended) [TANNED HIDE, obtained according to any of claims 1 to 22, characterized by the fact] The tanned hide according to claim 22, wherein the hide provides denser fiber packing in comparison to hide tanned by a traditional process.